

# Odd, but they're a big hit!

One of the weirdest — and most expensive — new series has scored a ratings boom thanks to a mismatched pairing.

Beauty And The Beast, which premieres soon on Channel Seven, has climbed the ratings ladder in the US as viewers tune in to the developing romance between a gorgeous socialite and a male monster.

The monster's appearance is being kept under wraps by Seven until the week the show goes to air, but TV Extra can reveal his real identity.

The actor behind the fur is Ron Perlman. As the Beast, he has become an unlikely sex symbol.

Viewing surveys indicate the show is especially popular with young women who are physically repelled but nonetheless mesmerised by the Beast.

The series is a modern version of the French fairytale.

Glamorous New York attorney Catherine Chandler (Linda Hamilton) is mugged and slashed while leaving a society party.

Left to die, she wakes up in a dank grotto filled with haze, classic columns, busts, even an old juke box.

Welcome to the home of the Beast!

The part wolf, part feline man creature by the name of Vincent lives in the maze of tunnels beneath New York.

Although he is a beast by appearance, he has a noble mind and spirit.

Vincent not only saves Catherine's life, he quotes her Dickens and Shakespeare while discussing social problems.

No primal forest was ever as full of terrors as New York City, as the powerful savage Vincent well knows.



Cover Story

Catherine Chandler (Linda Hamilton), the Beauty, with the Beast (Ron Perlman) in silhouette.

From BRAD CROUCH  
in New York

The relationship which develops between the two players from different worlds builds up a considerable romantic tension.

The final episode of the just finished ratings season pulled its biggest ever audience with the promise of a first kiss between the odd couple.

Between the developing rela-

tionship the series attacks some of the unpleasant realities of today's American society, such as the homeless problem.

Production costs of Beauty And The Beast total around \$1 million per episode.

Much of that goes to the special effects which make Vincent's caverns such an eerie underworld.

Perlman, 37, has a long history of theatre work but says the role of the Beast is his

most challenging to date.

Part of that is because of the four hours of make-up work needed to transform him from a regular guy to a hideous beast.

"It gives me plenty of time to learn my lines," he said.

"It's an unlikely way to become a sex symbol — spend a fortune to make yourself as ugly as possible then receive fan mail from women who think you a sensitive, misunderstood beast."

## Women rave over the Beast